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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN NOT OVERLY PLEASED BY NEW RUSSIA-UZBEKISTAN ALLIANCE

REF: HILLMEYER E-MAIL DTD 11-18-05

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard E. Hoagland, Ambassador, EXEC, Embassy Dushanbe.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with the Ambassador, Foreign Minister Nazarov did not hide his unease about the November 14 Russia-Uzbekistan Alliance. Tajikistan is concerned that Tashkent will use it's "new best friend" status with Moscow to harm Dushanbe's interests. He judged it would be unthinkable for Russia to establish a military base in Uzbekistan in the near term. He also criticized the European Union sanctions for not including "big fish" like President Karimov himself. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On November 21, Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov told the Ambassador that only two points in the November 14 Russia-Uzbekistan agreement are serious: mutual assistance in the event of an invasion, and major military-technical assistance to the Uzbek military. Nazarov asked sardonically, "So who's threatening Uzbekistan? Kyrgyzstan? I don't think they are planning to invade. Tajikistan? We're not planning to declare war. Afghanistan? Not likely. And how is Russia going to help reform Uzbekistan's military when it can't even reform its own?"

3. (C) Nazarov judged the real problem for Tajikistan is such close relations between Tashkent and Moscow will negatively influence other issues. "We're especially concerned that Karimov met [RusAl Chairman Oleg] Deripaska in Moscow. We're worried about his aims. We have information that Karimov will do everything possible to convince Deripaska to abandon his plans to invest in aluminum in Tajikistan and to finish Rogun dam and hydroelectric station."

4. (C) Nazarov was less than pleased with the briefing memo the Russian Embassy in Dushanbe had provided the Tajik Government about the Russia-Uzbekistan agreement. "There wasn't anything more than what we'd already seen in the press." He added sarcastically, "The important stuff must all be secret."

5. (C) In response to a question how Tajikistan would react to a new Russian military base in Uzbekistan, Nazarov said in the short term such a development would be "unthinkable," because it would be especially bad "diplomatic ethics" for the Russians to move in as soon as the Americans depart from Karshi-Khanabad.

6. (C) Uzbekistan may eventually join the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), according to Nazarov, but it cannot be permitted to emerge as "Moscow's enforcer in Central Asia - CSTO works by consensus."

EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

7. (C) Referring to the recent decision to fold the Central Asia Cooperation Organization into the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), Nazarov also expressed caution. He judged if Uzbekistan is willing to accept and abide by all previous EEC agreements, especially open borders, then the new arrangement is positive. "You can imagine that we would welcome Uzbekistan opening its border with us and facilitating trade, but~," he trailed off.

EUROPEAN UNION SANCTIONS NOT SERIOUS

8. (C) Nazarov volunteered that the European Union's list of 12

Uzbek officials sanctioned as a result of Andijon is not very serious "because it should have included the 'big fish' like Karimov and Foreign Minister Ganiyev."

9. (C) COMMENT: Although philosophical and phlegmatic as always, Nazarov did not hide his concerns about the new Russia-Uzbekistan Alliance because he fears Karimov will try to use it to harm Tajikistan's interests. His comments about Karimov courting Deripaska were especially telling, because Rahmonov and his government are putting a whole lot of their economic eggs in Deripaska's basket. We also were intrigued that he criticized the Russian Embassy for not being more

forthcoming than the press reports. The bottom line is that
Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry is not especially pleased with
this new development. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND

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